



**HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY!** Did you know that young men and women in the Middle Ages drew names from a bowl to see who would be their Valentine? They would wear this name pinned onto their sleeves for one week for everyone to see. This was the origin of the expression "to wear your heart on your sleeve."



# GAZEBO EXPRESS



YOUR COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENT SOURCE FOR THE TOWN OF HIGHLAND • FEBRUARY 2013

## BEAUTIFYING NORTH KENNEDY

### Highland to sell \$2 million bond to purchase land for development

The Town Council and Redevelopment Commission have set a retooling of north Kennedy Avenue as a priority for 2013 and beyond.

While the Council explores options for freeing up land the town owns at and around the Public Works garage, the Redevelopment Commission is eyeing commercial and residential properties that could be combined to provide a host of new economic development opportunities.

"Most of these properties were platted in the '50s and '60s and have less frontage than developers want," Redevelopment Director Cecile Petro said. "By combining parcels, we can open the corridor to economic development."

Council President Brian Novak said the idea is to take advantage of the Riverfront Development District approved by the state four years ago, as well as hotel developments planned to be built across the Little Calumet River in Hammond.

### RIVERFRONT OPPORTUNITY

An expansion of the Riverfront Development District was approved by the Indiana Alcohol and Tobacco Commission in 2009. The district was created to provide the incentive of a liquor license to upscale restaurateurs who want to locate in Highland.

Redevelopment Director Cecile Petro said there were a number of interested start-ups when the riverfront area was created. A lack of buildable space within the boundaries of the district has hampered efforts to advance the project.

The Redevelopment Commission has been given the go-ahead to sell a \$2 million bond, which will be used to purchase properties that can be combined for economic development.

"This is our opportunity to bring meaningful economic development to the north corridor," Novak said. "North Kennedy is one of our primary gateways. This is a project that will showcase who we are as a town and bring a renewal to a key area of our community." 🍷

### BIKE PATH PAVING

In a few short months, parks workers will finish striping more than three miles of the ErieLackawanna Bike/Hiking Trail from 45th Street to the Little Calumet River. The highly used recreational trail was given a facelift last fall.

Construction of a boxed culvert under the new Indianapolis Boulevard roadway and paving of the Little Calumet Trail between Wicker Park and Cabela's provided the final link in the system, which now provides a continuous paved path the length of the trail from Hammond south to Crown Point.

### SUPPORTING OUR TROOPS

When Operation Support our Service members needed an influx of donations for its annual Valentine's Day blitz, the local Family Videos stepped forward in a big way, donating 500 first-run movies to the cause.

Those videos were included along with gifts of coffee, cocoa, lip balm, travel games and more that were mailed to service men and women in Afghanistan in time for Feb. 14.

"Family Video was so generous with this donation," Colleen Aguirre, founder of Operation SOS, said. "I know these videos will be a nice surprise for our troops overseas."



## TOWN SEEKS IMPROVED WASTE, RECYCLING CONTRACT

Seeking a reduced rate and new method of trash collection, the Town Council requested bids from Republic Services and Waste Management.

Public Works Director John Bach said the council will compare the two proposals to determine the successful bidder before Republic Services current contract expires at the end of March.

The company selected will be responsible for providing two 96-gallon receptacles – one each for garbage and recycling. Bach explained that the wheeled containers make it safer and easier for residents to haul their garbage to the curb. Each truck has a mechanized feature that lifts

the standard containers, dramatically reduces the time it takes to collect garbage and makes it less likely workers will suffer an injury.

Because the new recycling containers will be about five times larger than the red bins currently in use, Bach said recycling collections will be scheduled every other week – on garbage day.

"The initial contract will be four years with the possibility of extending it another two," he said. "Our neighboring communities have seen significant reductions in the cost of trash pick-up with this system. Although there are no guarantees, we're hoping for the same." 🍷

### CALLING ALL TRAINERS!

Parks and Recreation is looking for certified personal trainers to work at Lincoln Center's fitness club.

Recreation Director Dave Byers said the club nearly doubled its membership in five short weeks – adding 628 new members during the no-initiation-fee promotion that concluded in January.

As a result, there is an increased need for ACE or NASM certified trainers. A fitness-related degree is preferred. Interested candidates should visit [www.highlandparks.org](http://www.highlandparks.org) or apply in person at Lincoln Center, 2450 Lincoln St.

**INFO:** For more information, please contact Dave Byers at (219) 838-0114.

## LOVE YOUR BUSINESS

Join the Highland Chamber at the 5th Annual Love Your Business networking event, which features a luncheon, vendors and door prizes.

**WHEN:** 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. **FEB. 14**

**WHERE:** The Center for Visual and Performing Arts, 1040 Ridge Road, Munster

**TICKETS:** \$15 in advance, \$20 at door

**INFO:** Visit [www.highlandchamber.com](http://www.highlandchamber.com) or call (219) 923-3666.

## BEST OF HIGHLAND

The reservation deadline is rapidly approaching for this inaugural event, which honors the best in leadership, excellence, beautification and achievement. Sponsorships available.

**WHEN:** 6 to 9 p.m. **MARCH 7**

**WHERE:** Wicker Park Social Center

**TICKETS:** \$40, cash bar

**RESERVATIONS:** Deadline is **FEB. 25**

**INFO:** Visit [www.highlandchamber.com](http://www.highlandchamber.com) or call (219) 923-3666.



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## NEWS TIP? STORY IDEA?

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# COUNCIL PRESIDENT EAGER TO TACKLE CAPITAL PROJECTS IN 2013 AGENDA


Councilman Brian Novak can't imagine a better time to lead the town than 2013. As president of this year's council, Novak will lead Highland through an important time in the town's history.

At the top of the agenda are: finalizing plans for a new public safety facility; acquiring properties that will help transform Kennedy Avenue north of Highway; and, initiating talks with Griffith to discuss the possibility of merging the two public works facilities into one to save money and free up land along the Little Calumet River.

In addition to those major capital projects, the town is moving forward on the Town Theatre revitalization and encouraging investment in downtown businesses with the facade improvement assistance program.

"This is going to be another busy year," Novak said. "We consider this a pivotal time for our town. We see the opportunity to continue to position Highland as one of the premier towns in our region and believe the time to act is now."

Novak said the town is also pursuing a host of flood control and sewer separation projects to make the system more efficient by reducing infiltration of ground water into the sanitary system.

Hammond charges the town for the amount of wastewater it treats while residents are charged based on water consumption. The difference between the two numbers is significant and must be paid by the town. Sewer projects in the works are expected to reduce the amount of infiltration and free up precious funds. 

## TOWN SPOTLIGHT: HIGHLAND REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GAINS MOMENTUM AS NEW VENTURES ARE DRAWN TO HIGHLAND

For the better part of the last two years, the Redevelopment Commission has been making headlines as they began engaging the community in a host of projects to increase the visibility – and draw – of Highland.

Commission President Mike Maloney said the group is blessed having five members who bring widely varying life experiences as well as a love for the town to every discussion.

"This past year has been a real breakthrough year for our town and we believe 2013 will be even better," Maloney said. "An uptick in the economy certainly played a role but the other is the tremendous package we have to offer to businesses who express an interest in locating here."

The facade improvement program has generated enthusiasm throughout Highland. At the same time, members of the commission: shepherded Strack & Van Til through the tax abatement process for their new expansive corporate headquarters on 45th Avenue; assisted VW of Orland Park, which is retrofitting the former Team Toyota on Indianapolis Boulevard; and helped Culver's, which is transforming a long-abandoned property at Ridge Road and Cline Avenue.

## ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION

### HIGHLAND REDEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

The Highland Redevelopment Commission, a five-member board appointed by the Town Council, is responsible for the redevelopment of Highland. This involves land, structure and infrastructure as well as business attraction and retention. The School Town of Highland also appoints two commissioners who serve as non-voting members. **INFO:** (219) 972-7598

**REDEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR:** Cecile Petro

**COMMISSIONERS:** President Michael Maloney, Vice President Greg Kuzmar, Secretary Dominic Noce, Member Bridget DeYoung, Member Tom Crowel.

### SCHOOL TOWN OF HIGHLAND CO-

**COMMISSIONERS:** Pat Krull, alt. Luanne Jurczak

**LEGAL COUNSEL:** Carol Green-Fraleigh, Green & Kuchel, P.C. Attorneys at Law

Maloney says the momentum that has been building shows no sign of slowing. "We have a host of projects in the works that will continue through 2013 and beyond," he said. "2012 was not an anomaly for Highland; it is a trend. It is gratifying to each of us on the Redevelopment Commission to see tangible changes occurring in town based on what we have been able to do." 



**WHEN YOU WISH UPON A STAR:** Conducted by Phillip Loos, the Highland musicians who made the trip include: Julie Brunt, Felipe Caldeira, Kathryn Cole, Lynn Cook, Carolyn Fiegle, Christina Fiegle, Annaliese Ford, Lauren Gora, Skylar Guffey, Jordan Haapalainen, Jimmy Jamrosz, Hayley Kim, Wyatt Kucginski, Dean Lebetter, Jack Lebetter, Emily Lozano, Ryan Moskalick, Chris Peters, Brooke Rycerz, Olivia Tiffany, Mia Veronesi, Jade Watts, Amanda Zak, Sasa Zdruja and Catherine Ziebarth. [PHOTO PROVIDED]

## DISNEY DREAMS COME TRUE

When the chance of a lifetime to meet and perform for Mickey and his cohorts in famous downtown Disney presented itself, Annaliese Ford and two dozen of her Highland High/Middle School orchestra colleagues didn't think twice — they jumped at the chance.

Orchestra teacher Phillip Loos said his students were invited to perform at Walt Disney World during fall break following a performance tape submitted months earlier.

The group presented a concert of Lady Gaga tunes, the Pallido aria by Carlo Jenkins and a Disney medley for an enthusiastic crowd of visitors who paused at the Downtown Disney Dockside Stage to enjoy the show.

"2012 marked our third trip to Disney to perform," Loos said. "This an important opportunity for our kids to perform on the stage of one of the largest entertainment companies in the world. Our students got to see how it all works. They had the opportunity to meet the sound technicians

and directors and see how a professional performance is put together. The Disney folks made them feel that they were part of the cast. They were working for Disney that day."

In addition to their performance and practices, Loos said students enjoyed trips to each of the theme parks during their five days in Florida.

Disney has a host of programs designed specifically for children beginning in elementary school and continuing through college. In addition to instrumental performances, Disney invites vocal groups and dance ensembles to perform.

Ford said she enjoyed every minute of the trip but was the most excited about getting to know her orchestra friends out of school.

"Our students gained a great deal from this trip," Loos said. "In addition to the education each of our orchestra students received, they developed friendships that will last a lifetime."

## TIME TO REGISTER FOR KINDERGARTEN

The public elementary schools will hold kindergarten registration the week of March 11. Parents are urged to bring their children and the items listed below to the school that serves their immediate district according to the following schedule:

**8:45 TO 11 AM:**  
Last names "K" through "Z"

**12:15 TO 2:30 PM:**  
Last names "A" through "J"

**MONDAY, MARCH 11**  
Southridge Elementary School  
9221 Johnston St. • (219) 922-5650

**TUESDAY, MARCH 12**  
Warren Elementary School  
2901 100th St. • (219) 922-5660

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 13**  
Johnston Elementary School  
8220 Fifth St. • (219) 923-2428

**FRIDAY, MARCH 15**  
Merkley Elementary School  
9340 Fifth St. • (219) 922-5640

**AGE REQUIREMENT:** Students must be 5 years of age on or before Aug. 1, 2013

### ITEMS NEEDED FOR REGISTRATION:

#### 1. Five proofs of residency

**Two of the following:** NIPSCO, water, phone, cable (utility bills/deposit receipts)

**Two of the following:** Driver's license/state ID showing current address, vehicle registration, recent paycheck/unemployment check receipt.

**One of the following:** Lease and rent receipt, mortgage and homeowners insurance documents, notarized letter with three proofs of residency from the homeowner (parent/guardian must provide ID listed above)

#### 2. Proof of custody, if applicable

#### 3. Birth certificate

#### 4. Social security number

#### 5. Current immunization records (name and phone number of pediatrician)

## POLICE KEEPING AN EYE ON VACATIONERS' HOMES

The town's Volunteers in Policing are aiming to keep properties safe for residents who are going to be away for a few days or longer.

VIPs members perform site visits and perimeter checks every few days to ensure the residence remains secure. All it takes is a phone call to the Police Department at (219) 838-3184.

It is just one of the many jobs the more than 30 members of the VIPs squad perform free-of-charge.

Other tasks include: neighborhood/business/school patrols, escorts, traffic control, special events, vehicle maintenance/repairs, fingerprinting and data entry. Most recently, they took over animal control.

"Our VIPs are important members of our department," Chief Pete Hojnicky said. "We ask a great deal of them and they are the first ones to step forward to see if there is anything else they can do. They provide a valuable service to our community."

## THANK YOU TO OUR VIPs!

In 2012, the town's 30-plus members of the Volunteers in Policing unit volunteered 6,184 hours to keeping the town safe and secure. Translated into dollars and sense, those volunteer hours saved the community about \$160,000. Chief Pete Hojnicky said, as importantly, the tasks performed by the VIPs allow police officers more time to conduct other vital, police-related functions.



## LEARNING WITH LEGOS

Learning through play just got better! Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) enrichment classes utilize Legos for a fun and active learning experience.

### DUPLO TECH MACHINES CAMP: AGES 3-5

**WHEN:** 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. **MARCH 6 - 27**

**WHERE:** Lincoln Center

**REGISTRATION:** Deadline is **FEB. 20**

**CLASS FEE:** \$45 residents/\$50 non-residents

**MATERIALS FEE:** \$25 paid at first class

### LEGO SIMPLE MACHINES CAMP: AGES 5-8

**WHEN:** 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. **MARCH 6 - 27**

**WHERE:** Lincoln Center

**REGISTRATION:** Deadline is **FEB. 20**

**CLASS FEE:** \$55 residents/\$60 non-residents

**MATERIALS FEE:** \$25 paid at first class

**INFO:** Visit [www.highlandparks.org](http://www.highlandparks.org) or call (219) 838-0114.

## ADULT SLOWPITCH SOFTBALL

Registration begins this month for the summer adult slowpitch softball season, which will be held from April 22 to Aug. 22. Rosters are limited to 20 players and frozen once the limit is reached. No individual fees.

### 15-GAME SEASON & SINGLE-ELIM. TOURNEY

**TEAM FEE:** \$700 due by **MARCH 25**

**MEN'S TEAMS:** Mondays (12), Tuesdays (18), Wednesdays (18), Thursdays (24)

**COED TEAMS:** Mondays (12), Tuesdays (6), Wednesdays (6)

**NOTE:** Fridays will be used for rainouts.

### 14-GAME SEASON

**TEAM FEE:** \$560 due by **MARCH 25**

**MEN'S TEAMS:** Sunday doubleheaders (8), single games (8), Sunday co-rec (8)

**INFO:** Visit [www.highlandparks.org](http://www.highlandparks.org) or call (219) 838-0114.

## BUNCO WITH BENEFITS

Have fun and help others at the 4th Annual Bunco with Benefits. Sponsored by the GFWC Highland Woman's Club, this annual event features cash prizes for Bunco winners as well as raffles and door prizes.

**WHEN:** Doors open at 12:30 p.m. **FEB. 10.**

Bunco starts at 1:15 p.m.

**WHERE:** Lincoln Center

**COST:** \$20 includes sandwiches, salads, sweets

**INFO:** For tickets or more information, call Pat at (219) 924-4485 or Rita at (219) 924-6693.

## OLD-TIME RADIO PROGRAM

Join the Highland Historical Society for an entertaining afternoon as Andrew Finick takes us back in time when families would gather around the radio. Radios from this era will be on display. Refreshments will be served.

**WHEN:** 2 p.m. **FEB. 17**

**WHERE:** Lincoln Center, Room 108

**TICKETS:** \$20

**INFO:** Call (219) 922-1047.

## Family & Friends Sweetheart's Dance

Grab your family, neighbors and friends and head on over to the Family and Friend's Sweetheart's Dance, hosted by North Township Trustee Frank J. Mrvan. Food, DJ, games, prizes and pictures with Cinderella are included.

**WHEN:** 4 to 7 p.m. Saturday, **FEB. 9**

**WHERE:** Wicker Park Club House

**AGES:** All are welcome. Children ages 4 to 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

**ADMISSION:** \$5 couple, \$3 additional child

**RESERVATIONS:** Call (219) 932-2530, ext. 331.



## Daddy-Daughter Dance

Highland dads and their daughters are invited to enjoy dancing, raffle, refreshments and music at the annual Daddy-Daughter Dance. Photographers provide one free photo. Extras available for purchase.

**WHEN:** 7 to 9 p.m. Friday, **FEB. 8**

**WHERE:** Lincoln Center Fieldhouse

**AGES:** 5 to 13, Highland residents only

**LATE REGISTRATION:** \$20 couple, \$10 additional daughter

**DEADLINE:** Tickets must be purchased by Feb. 7 at Lincoln Center. No tickets will be sold the day of the dance.

**INFO:** Visit [www.highlandparks.org](http://www.highlandparks.org) or call (219) 838-0114.

## 7TH & 8TH GRADE BASKETBALL

Seventh and eighth grade students attending Highland private and public middle schools are invited to participate in the 7th & 8th Grade Basketball League. League format will be determined by registration numbers. Everyone receives a T-shirt. The first-place team receives winner T-shirts. Teams will be determined by player draft with the coaches.

**WHEN:** 5 to 10 p.m. Wednesdays, **MARCH 13** through **MAY 15**

**PRACTICE BEGINS:** First week of March

**WHERE:** Lincoln Center

**FEE:** \$45 per person

**REGISTRATION:** Deadline is **FEB. 22**

**INFO:** Visit [www.highlandparks.org](http://www.highlandparks.org) or call (219) 838-0114.

## HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL

Highland high-school age teens or students are invited to participate in the Parks & Recreation's High School Basketball League. League format will be determined by registration numbers. Teams must wear shirts with numbers. The first-place team will receive winner T-shirts. Participants must sign up as a team; maximum 10 players per team.

**WHEN:** 5 to 10 p.m. Wednesdays, **MARCH 13** through **MAY 15**

**PRACTICE BEGINS:** First week of March

**WHERE:** Lincoln Center

**FEE:** \$325 per team

**REGISTRATION:** Deadline is **MARCH 1**

**INFO:** Visit [www.highlandparks.org](http://www.highlandparks.org) or call (219) 838-0114.